

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ADP-00 NEA-10 COA-02 CG-00 EB-11 AID-20

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10

PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12 RSR-01 OMB-01 IO-13

ACDA-19 PC-04 TRSE-00 /181 W
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R 270915 Z JUN 73

FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4497

INFO AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USMISSION NATO

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E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MILI, MT, IT

SUBJ: FOREIGN ASSISTANCE FOR MALTESE PIONEER CORPS

1. SUMMARY: ON JUNE 26 ITALIAN AND FRENCH AMBASSADORS PROVIDED BRIEFING ON THEIR DISCUSSIONS WITH GOM COVERING ASSISTANCE TO NEW PIONEER CORPS. WHILE NO DECISION HAVE BEEN TAKEN BY TWO GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED, MINTOFF IS ASKING ASSISTANCE FOR BOTH MILITARY TRAINING AND LEADERSHIP IN PUBLIC WORKS- TYPE PROJECTS, INCLUDING MONEY. POSSIBLE LIBYAN PARTICIPATION STILL NEBULOUS. END SUMMARY.

2. AT LUNCH JUNE 26 WITH NATO COUNTRY CHIEFS OF MISSION ITALIAN AND FRENCH AMBASSADORS DESCRIBED STATUS OF THEIR RESPECTIVE DISCUSSIONS WITH GOM ON ASSISTANCE TO PIONEER CORPS.

3. TWO MAN FRENCH MILITARY MISSION DEPARTED JUNE 25 AFTER EXTENSIVE DISCUSSIONS INCLUDING MEETING WITH
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MINTOFF. MINTOFF HAS PROPOSED TO FRENCH THAT FRANCE PRODUCE EIGHT MILITARY OFFICERS, BROKEN DOWN AS TWO ADVISERS AND TWO EACH FOR THREE PUBLIC WORKS PROJECTS TO BE UNDERTAKEN BY PIONEER CORPS. PROJECTS WOULD BE NEW QUAY AT MARSA, NEW WATER LEVEL ACCESS ROAD TO VALLETTA, AND FERRY BREAKWATER AT MALTA END OF MALTA- GOZO FERRY. MINTOFF SAID HE WOULD LIKE FRENCH OFFICERS TO WEAR MILITARY UNIFORMS AND ASSERTED THAT HE HAD COMMITMENT FOR FINANCIAL AID DIRECTLY FROM POMPIDOU DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO PARIS. NOT CLEAR TO FRENCH AMB WHETHER THIS ALLEGED COMMITMENT INVOLVED ONLY COST OF FRENCH OFFICERS OR COST OF PROJECTS IN ADDITION. FRENCH HAVE NOT YET GIVEN REPLY.

4. ITALIAN AMBASSADOR MASSA BERNUCCI SAID MINTOFF IS NOW PROPOSING TWO- STAGE PROGRAM FOR ITALIAN HELP. FIRST WOULD INVOLVE 15 OR 20 ITALIAN OFFICERS TO PROVIDE NON- COMBAT MILITARY TRAINING TO PIONEER CORPS RECRUITS. THIS COULD INCLUDE SOME RIFLE TRAINING (AT WHICH POINT UK HIGH COMMISSIONER SAID MALTESE HAVE AMPLE SUPPLY OF RIFLES IN STORAGE). SECOND STAGE FOR ITALIANS WOULD BRING SOME 40 ENGINEER AND COMMUNICATIONS OFFICERS FOR TWO YEAR PERIOD BEGINNING OCTOBER, WHO WOULD LEAD PIONEER CORPS INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS IN THREE FIELDS: ROADS AND OTHER PUBLIC WORKS, TELECOMMUNICATIONS, AND WATER AND ELECTRICITY.

5. COST OF ENTERPRISE WOULD BE EQUIVALENT OF U. S. \$3 MILLION, AND ALONG LINES OF ASSERTION REGARDING POMPIDOU, MINTOFF CLAIMS HE HAS ENGAGED FROM ANDREOTTI TO PICK UP THE TAB. MASSA BERNUCCI SAYS HE IS SUGGESTING TO GOI THAT THEY PROPOSE MINTOFF FIRST USE CONCESSIONAL LOAN OFFERED BY ITALY IN 1971 AND NEVER UTILIZED. ITALY COULD THEN CONSIDER FURTHER LOAN IF NECESSARY. HE ALSO SAID GOI HAS PROPOSED THROUGH COUNCIL OF EUROPE A SOFT LOAN TO MALTA FROM LUXEMBOURG- BASED EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENT BANK. AS FURTHER BITE ON ITALIANS, MINTOFF APPARENTLY EXPECTS THEM TO PROVIDE SOME HEAVY CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT FOR THE PIONEER CORPS.

6. MINTOFF TOLD ITALIANS HE WAS DETERMINED TO ACTIVATE PIONEER CORPS BY AUGUST6, 1973 TO BEGIN MILITARY
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TRAINING AT THAT TIME. ITALIAN PROBLEM IS THAT WITH CARETAKER GOVERNMENT DECISIONS INVOLVING MONEY ARE ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO TAKE, AND ITALIAN ARMY IS NOT PREPARED TO MOVE UNTIL MONEY IS GUARANTEED.

7. WITH REGARD TO POSSIBLE LIBYAN ROLE WITH PIONEER CORPS, MASSA BERNUCCI SAID THAT AMBASSADOR DUCCI,

DURING VISIT HERE LAST WEEK, TOLD MINTOFF THAT ANY LIBYAN PARTICIPATION IN MILITARY ASPECTS OF TRAINING WOULD POSE "INSUPERABLE DIFFICULTIES" FOR ITALY. NONETHELESS, MINTOFF, ACCORDING TO MASSA BERNUCCI, STILL HAS DESIRE TO SOMEHOW ASSOCIATE LIBYANS WITH PART OF PIONEER CORPS PROGRAM. DIFFICULTY SEEMS TO BE THAT THERE IS NO USEFUL ROLE LIBYANS COULD PLAY AFTER MILITARY TRAINING IS COMPLETED.

8. FOLLOWING END OF THIS BRIEFING UK HIGH COMMISSIONER AND ITALIAN AMBASSADOR GOT INTO FAIRLY LIVELY DISCUSSION ON MERITS OR OTHERWISE OF PROVIDING FURTHER ASSISTANCE TO MINTOFF. HIGH COMMISSIONER ASKED RHETORICALLY WHETHER WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO PILE ON ASSISTANCE IF IT WOULD HELP TO KEEP MINTOFF IN POWER. ITALIAN RESPONSE WAS BASICALLY THAT ITALY'S AID WAS FOR MALTA AND NOT MINTOFF. HE POINTED OUT THAT ITALY HAS A SPECIAL CONCERN BECAUSE OF GEOGRAPHY, AND SAID THEY WERE LOOKING TOWARD RELATIONS WITH MALTA TEN TO FIFTEEN YEARS HENCE. FROM THIS POINT OF VIEW HE ASKED IF THERE WERE ANY ALTERNATIVES TO A COOPERATIVE APPROACH.

9. ONE SMALL BUT INTERESTING POINT CAME UP WHEN ITALIAN WAS ASKED ABOUT QUALITY OF MINTOFF'S ITALIAN LANGUAGE CAPABILITY. MASSA BERNUCCI SAID MINTOFF'S SPOKEN ITALIAN WAS EXCELLENT BUT HE NONETHELESS CONDUCTED ALL OF HIS BUSINESS WITH MINTOFF IN ENGLISH. GIVEN THE OCCASIONAL DIFFICULTIES UK AND US CHIEFS OF MISSION HAVE WITH MASSA BERNUCCI'S ENGLISH COMPREHENSION AND EXPRESSION, WE WILL HAVE TO BE CAREFUL TO AVOID ANY MIS-UNDERSTANDINGS.

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